

Liberty Street Project FAQs

Project Overview

Why build this project?

The Downtown Streetscape and Mobility Transformation Project, also known as the Liberty Street Project, was originally identified in the [Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan](#) (2021), which looked at ways to improve downtown Harrisonburg for the future. The project will upgrade intersections by adding pedestrian signals and curb bump-outs to improve safety and include beautification elements.

Pedestrian improvements will feature new ADA ramps and make it more appealing to walk along Liberty Street/Noll Drive, better integrating the corridor into downtown Harrisonburg. The project also transforms the vehicle lane on the east side of the roadway, closest to downtown, into two-way separated bicycle lanes, also known as a two-way cycle track, starting at Noll Drive at North Main Street and continuing south down Liberty Street to Grattan Street. This cycle track will be protected by a median separating it from traffic. From Grattan Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Way, a new 10-foot-wide shared-use path will be built on the west side of South Main Street.

Together, the cycle track and shared-use path fill a critical gap in the City's bike and pedestrian network by connecting the Bluestone Trail to the planned Northend Greenway, resulting in an approximately 6-mile continuous north-south separated facility. The project also provides an opportunity to expedite the replacement of aging water and sanitary sewer infrastructure along the corridor.

Is there demand for a two-way cycle track on Liberty Street?

Over 100 people bike along or across the Liberty Street corridor daily. Because the roadway is currently one-way southbound, and does not have a dedicated bicycle facility, this number is expected to increase significantly when the bi-directional separated facility is established. The cycle track and shared-use path connecting to the Bluestone Trail and Northend Greenway will encourage more residents who prioritize bike safety to bike to and from downtown.

Who is paying for this?

In 2023, Harrisonburg received \$14.3 million in federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) **grant funds** from FHWA. This represents the full cost of the transportation components. Local funds will be used for the water and sewer replacements that were needed independently of this project.

Can the City use the \$14.3 million in FHWA funding for other projects/improvements?

No, the grant is specifically tied to the improvements on Liberty Street and is not eligible for any other uses by the City.

Traffic and Transportation

How will this impact traffic on Liberty Street?

A series of transportation studies conducted in [2019](#), 2021 (STARS), and 2025 (RAISE Traffic Memorandum, to be available at the Spring 2026 public hearing) evaluated the needs of the downtown area and specifically analyzed the feasibility of reducing Liberty Street/Noll Drive to one vehicle lane. These studies found that while a slight increase in delay is expected at the four signalized intersections within the project area, **overall travel times along the corridor are not expected to change significantly**. The results show that a one-lane configuration can operate effectively while meeting safety, operational, and long-term mobility needs.

What if there is a crash on Interstate 81?

While crashes along Interstate 81 within the vicinity of Harrisonburg do occasionally happen, the City does not consider this as a limiting factor, given that US-11 is one lane in each direction in other areas of the city and Rockingham County.

Does this project accommodate projected traffic from the Link Development or other future growth?

The Link development traffic impact analysis (TIA) evaluated its impact under the assumed conditions of this project (one lane Liberty Street) and found that increased trips on Liberty Street are not expected to disrupt traffic flow.

How will bicyclists safely cross at a signalized intersection?

When traveling along the cycle track and approaching a signalized intersection, bicyclists should cross when the pedestrian signal indicates “walk”. This ensures that bicyclists and pedestrians can safely enter the bicycle lane/crosswalk. Appropriate signage will be placed at each signalized intersection to alert both bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. A “bikes use ped signal” sign will explain to bicyclists to follow the ped signal indication.

Parking and Access

What will happen to the on-street parking on Liberty Street?

There will still be on-street parking along Liberty Street and Noll Drive, but it will be reduced. Existing street parking on the east side of Liberty Street/Noll Drive will be removed, along with a few spaces on the west side.

How will this project affect access to businesses?

The project will minimize business access impacts, but some access management changes will be necessary. These include consolidating entrances, improving driveway alignments, and, in some cases, closing or narrowing select entrances to improve safety and pedestrian space. Public Works staff will communicate with impacted businesses and property owners during the design phase. Property impacts will be addressed during the right-of-way phase, beginning in 2026.

What about emergency vehicles (Fire trucks, Police, etc.)?

Public Works staff and project consultants are coordinating with the City’s Public Safety departments to ensure emergency vehicles can be fully accommodated throughout this project. If a road closure is required, traffic will be detoured to nearby parallel routes such as Route 42 and Mason Street. **Emergency vehicles will still be able to access all areas of Liberty Street during construction and once the project is completed.**

Will there be any changes to the bus stops along Liberty Street/Noll Drive?

Public Works staff and project consultants are working with HDPT to assess potential changes to bus stops along the corridor. Existing stop locations may be adjusted slightly,

and addition of bus pull-offs at multiple stops will provide safe operations for current bus service and any potential increase in service frequency. This project will upgrade all existing HDPT stops along Liberty Street to ensure ADA compliance.

What about delivery trucks turning on and off Liberty Street/Noll Drive?

While through trucks are generally encouraged to avoid downtown, Public Works staff will work with business stakeholders during the project design to ensure necessary truck movements are accommodated. There are no existing or planned designated delivery zones along the corridor, so no changes to current delivery operations or parking are anticipated.

Streetscape and Beautification

Will the median separating the bike lanes from the vehicle lanes have plants, trees, and other beautification elements?

Public Works staff are working to include beautification along the Liberty Street corridor, such as perennials, pollinator plants, and trees within sections of the median that are wide enough to accommodate plantings. Safety and response requirements from the City Public Safety departments will also be considered, and staff will continue coordinating to maximize both safety and beautification.

Construction

When will construction begin and how long will it take?

Construction is scheduled to **begin in Spring 2028** and is anticipated to be completed in **Fall 2029**.

What are the plans for traffic during construction?

Public Works staff will identify potential construction traffic patterns and communicate these with businesses, property owners, and the public during the design phase and the right-of-way phase, beginning in 2026 and extending through construction.

Maintenance and Public Input

How will the new cycle track and landscaping be maintained once built?

Public Works staff will be responsible for maintenance of both the cycle track and any new landscaping along the Liberty Street corridor once the project is complete.

How has public input been incorporated into the project design?

Multiple opportunities for public input will occur throughout the design process. A Kickoff Open House was held in December 2025, followed by a planned design public hearing in Spring 2026. At both events, the public can meet with staff and consultants, ask questions, and provide feedback. Letters were also sent to property owners and businesses along Liberty Street to inform them about the project and opportunities to participate.